

Troilus and
Criseyde.
Liber IV.

forthy, with al myn herte I yow beseke,
If that yow list don ought for my preyere,
And for the love which that I love yow eke,
That er that I departe fro yow here,
That of so good a comfort and a chere
I may you seen, that ye may bringe at reste
Myn herte, which that is at point to breste.

And over al this, I pray yow, quod she tho,
Myn owene hertes soothfast suffisaunce,
Sin I am thyn al hool, withouten mo,
That whyl that I am absent, no plesaunce
Of othere do me fro your remembraunce.
for I am ever agast, forwhy men rede,
That Love is thing ay ful of bisy drede.

for in this world ther liveth lady noon,
If that ye were untrew, as God defende!
That so bitraysed were or wo bigoon
As I, that alle trouthe in yow entende.
And douteles, if that ich other wende,
I nere but deed; and er ye cause finde,
for Goddes love, so beth me not unkinde.

¶ To this answerde Troilus and seyde:
Now God, to whom ther nis no cause ywrye,
Me glade, as wis I never unto Criseyde,
Sin thilke day I saw hir first with ye,
Was fals, ne never shal til that I dye.
At shorte wordes, wel ye may me leve;
I can no more, it shal be founde at preve.

¶ Graunt mercy, goode myn, ywis, quod
she,
And blisful Venus lat me never sterve
Er I may stonde of plesaunce in degree
To quyte him wel, that so wel can deserve;
And whyl that God my wit wol me conserve,
I shal so doon, so trewe I have yow founde,
That ay honour to meward shal rebounde.

for trusteth wel, that your estat royal
Ne veyn delyt, nor only worthinesse
Of yow in werre, or torney marcial,
Ne pompe, array, nobley, or eek richesse,
Ne made me to rewe on your distresse;
But moral vertue, grounded upon trouthe,
That was the cause I first hadde on yow routhe.

Eek gentil herte and manhod that ye hadde,
And that ye hadde, as me thoughte, in despyt
Every thing that souned into badde,
As rudenesse and poeplish appetyt;
And that your reson brydled your delyt,
This made, aboven every creature,
That I was your, and shal, whyl I may dure.

And this may lengthe of yeres not fordo,
Ne remuable fortune deface;
But Juppiter, that of his might may do
The sorwful to be glad, so yeve us grace,
Er nightes ten, to meten in this place,
So that it may your herte and myn suffyse;
And fareth now wel, for tyme is that ye ryse.

¶ And after that they longe ypleyned hadde,
And ofte ykist and streite in armes folde,
The day gan ryse, and Troilus him cladde,
And rewfulliche his lady gan biholde,
As he that felte dethes cares colde.
And to hir grace he gan him recomaunde;
Wher him was wo, this holde I no demaunde.

for mannes heed imaginen ne can,
Ne entendement considere, ne tonge telle
The cruel peynes of this sorwful man,
That passen every torment down in helle,
for whan he saugh that she ne mighte dwelle,
Which that his soule out of his herte rente,
Withouten more, out of the chaumbre he wente.
Explicit Liber Quartus.

TROILUS AND CRISEYDE. LIBER QUINTUS.
Incipit Liber Quintus.



DAN THE FATAL DESTINEE
That Joves hath in disposicion,
And to yow, angry Parcas, sustren thre,
Committeth, to don execucion;
for which Criseyde moste out of the toun,
And Troilus shal dwelle forth in pyne
Til Lachesis his threed no lenger twyne.

¶ The golden-tressed
Phebus heighe onlofte
Thryes hadde alle with
his bemes shene
The snowes molte, and
Zephirus as ofte
Ybrought ayein the
tendre leves grene,
Sin that the sone of
Ecuba the quene
Bigan to love hir first, for whom his sorwe
Was al, that she departe sholde amorwe.

ful redy was at pryme Dyomede,
Criseyde unto the Grekes ost to lede,
for sorwe of which she felte hir herte blede,
As she that niste what was best to rede.
And twely, as men in bokes rede,
Men wiste never womman han the care,
Ne was so looth out of a toun to fare.

This Troilus, withouten reed or lore,
As man that hath his joyes eek forlore,
Was waytinge on his lady evermore
As she that was the soothfast crop and more
Of al his lust, or joyes heretofore.
But Troilus, now farewell al thy joye,
for shaltow never seen hir eft in Troye!

Soth is, that whyl he bood in this manere,
He gan his wo ful manly for to hyde,
That wel unnethe it seen was in his chere;
But at the yate ther she sholde oute ryde
With certeyn folk, he hoved hir tabyde,
So wo bigoon, al wolde he nought him pleyne,

That on his hors unnethe he sat for peyne.

for ire he quook, so gan his herte gnawe,
Whan Diomede on horse gan him dresse,
And seyde unto himself this ilke sawe:
Alas, quod he, thus foul a wrecchednesse
Why suffre ich it, why nil ich it redresse?
Were it not bet at ones for to dye
Than evermore in langour thus to drye?

Why nil I make at ones riche and pore
To have ynough to done, er that she go?
Why nil I bringe al Troye upon a rore?
Why nil I sleen this Diomede also?
Why nil I rather with a man or two
Stele hir away? Why wol I this endure?
Why nil I helpen to myn owene cure?

¶ But why he nolde doon so fel a dede,
That shal I seyn, and why him liste it spare:
He hadde in herte alwey a maner drede,
Lest that Criseyde, in rumour of this fare,
Sholde han ben slayn; lo, this was al his care.
And elles, certeyn, as I seyde yore,
He hadde it doon, withouten wordes more.

Criseyde, whan she redy was to ryde,
ful sorwfully she sighte, and seyde Alas!
But forth she moot, for ought that may
bityde,
And forth she rit ful sorwfully a pas.
Ther nis non other remedie in this cas.
What wonder is though that hir sore smerte,
Whan she forgoth hir owene swete herte?

This Troilus, in wyse of curteisye,
With hauke on hond, and with an huge route
Of knyghtes, rood and dide hir companye,
Passinge al the valey fer withoute.
And ferther wolde han riden, out of doute,
ful fayn, and wo was him to goon so sone;
But torne he moste, and it was eek to done.

And right with that was Antenor ycome
Out of the Grekes ost, and every wight
Was of it glad, and seyde he was welcome.
And Troilus, al nere his herte light,
He peyned him with al his fulle might
him to withholde of wepinge at the leste,
And Antenor he kiste, and made feste.

And therwithal he moste his leve take,
And caste his eye upon hir pitously,
And neer he rood, his cause for to make,
To take hir by the honde al sobrelly.
And Lord! so she gan wepen tendrely!
And he ful softe and sleighly gan hir seye:
Now hold your day, and dooth me not to deye.

¶ With that his courser torned he aboute
With face pale, and unto Diomede
No word he spak, ne noon of al his route;